(c) The LCA has large number of State-of-the-art components, assemblies and subsystems and also the flight software of highly complex nature which are required ' to be extensively tested and evaluated for their airworthiness, before conducting the first flight so that any likely problem is identified and eliminated at the pre-flight stage itself. This is a time consuming exercise of essential nature and its under advanced stage of accomplishment.

Declassification of INA Files

20. SHRI DEBABRATA BISWAS: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that he has recently declassifed a number of INA files and records and ordered them to be sent to the National Archives for public inspection and study;

(b) if so, what were the criteria adopted to declassify these documents;

(c) whether it is also a fact that there are still several thousands of files which have not been classified and still kept in his Ministry as "Secret records";

(d) if so, the reasons therefor and whether these records are proposed to be reviewed; and

(e) if answer to part (d) above is in the negative, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b) In 1997, Ministry of Defence constituted a committee of officials to examine the INA records in its custody taking into consideration the sensitiveness of these records in relation to National security, relations with foreign countries and potential of raising controversies from various angles. Based on the recommendation of the committee, the INA records were declassified and transferred to the National Archives of India in August, 1997.

(c)No, Sir.

(d)and (e) Do not arise.

Chinese threat on Indian Border

21. SHRI YERRA NARAYANASWAMY: DR. D. VENKATESHWAR RAO:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a)whether China and Burma have become a constant threat on India's border both at sea and on land;

(b)if so, the details thereof; and

(c)the steps proposed to counter the threat?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (c) China maintains the largest standing army in the world and is a nuclear weapon state. It has also undertaken military modernisaton programmes including the augmentation of its nuclear arsenal. It is also upgrading its logistic and infrastructure facilities in the India-China border areas. China is assisting Pakistan in their nuclear programme and missile programme. The defence relations between China & Myanmar also have a bearing on India's security.

All developments which affect India's national security are constantly monitored and reviewed and necessary measures are taken, as required, to maintain defence preparedness.

It will not be appropriate to disclose further details in the interest of our national security and relations with neighbouring countries.

ISI funding insurgency in Tamil Nadu

22. SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have enough evidence of complicity of the Inter Ser vices Intelligence of Pakistan in funding insurgency in Tamil Nadu as reported in the Pioneer of April 16, 1998;

(b) if so, how far back in history this evidence goes; and